

EXHIBIT B

SIPC To Reinstitute Assessments Of Member Firms' Operating Revenues

sipc.org

WASHINGTON, D.C. – March 2, 2009 – The Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC), which maintains a special reserve fund authorized by Congress to help investors at failed brokerage firms, announced today that SIPC members assessments will be based, as of April 1, 2009, on one-quarter of 1 percent of the net operating revenues of member firms.

Currently, SIPC members are assessed a flat \$150 per year.

SIPC President and CEO Stephen Harbeck said: **"We are authorized under our charter from Congress to take steps necessary to ensure that we have sufficient reserves to allow us to carry out our mission and to ensure investor confidence in our operations. It is our intention to ensure that assessments keep pace with demands on our reserve."**

In a letter sent today to CEOs at member firms, SIPC Chairman Armando J. Bucelo, Jr., writes:

"Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Investor Protection Act of 1970 as amended and the provisions of Article 6 of the (SIPC) corporate bylaws, SIPC has determined that the SIPC fund balance is reasonably likely to aggregate less than \$1 billion and will remain less than \$1 billion for a period of six months or more."

Under SIPC rules, any assessment change is to begin on the first day of the month following the date of SIPC's published determination.